



## THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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# Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., Navajo Council welcome the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan to Navajo Nation

*Minister Farrakhan's visit to Navajo Nation continues President Shirley's outreach to people of all creeds, colors, ethnicities and nationalities*

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The leader of the Nation of Islam, the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, was welcomed here this week by Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., and the Navajo Nation Council during its summer session.

His visit was part of the Nation of Islam's outreach to indigenous nations of North America. He offered his assistance in the areas of economics, culture, social justice, moral

development and political advancement.

Mr. Farrakhan said he came to the Navajo Nation "to see, listen and learn." On Monday evening, he had dinner with President Shirley, First Lady Vikki Shirley, Miss Navajo Nation Rachelle James and staff.

On Tuesday, he met with eight members of the Navajo Nation Council in the President's office. Among them were Ervin Keeswood, Ben Shelly, Raymond Max, Rex Lee Jim, LoRenzo Bates, Pete Ken Atcitty and Thomas Walker, Jr.

On Wednesday, he addressed the Navajo Nation Council for 45 minutes, delivering a message of hope, unity and inspiration.

"I'm not a stranger," Mr. Farrakhan said to the Council. "I am your brother. I am you kith. I am your kin, and I've come to establish that relationship with the greatest indigenous people in America, the Navajo Nation. But from this we must unite the whole indigenous people to address the challenges we face as a people."

"You are the original people of this planet," he said. "You are akin to all the native peoples of the earth and are direct descendent of the Great Spirit you call *Diyin*."



*Nation of Islam National Representative, the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, addresses the Navajo Nation Council on Wednesday. He came to learn about the Navajo Nation at the invitation of Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr.*

He said the indigenous people of the world are related as families despite huge geographical distances.

"You have indigenous people who look just like you in Mongolia," he said. "You have people who look just like you in parts of Asia, Central America, South America, the Caribbean. You are a great people and you need to think more of contacting all the members of your family."

Mr. Farrakhan arrived Monday evening at the invitation of President Shirley, who met him for the first time in Phoenix last March.

"At that time he invited me to come and put my foot down on sacred land on the Navajo Nation," Mr. Farrakhan said.

His granddaughter, Yo'NasDa LoneWolf Muhammad, national director of the Indigenous Nations Alliance of the Millions More Movement, first contacted President Shirley's office in January. The Nation of Islam seeks to establish a positive relationship with tribes across the country. Also traveling here with Mr. Farrakhan was his wife Kadijah, his daughter Maria, Mother Tynnetta Muhammad, wife of the late Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and a staff of 12.

Mr. Farrakhan explained that his desire to see the black and indigenous people unite and form bonds is not new but was passed to him from his own teacher and spiritual guide, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

"From the very day that I met him, his aim was always to unite the black and the red and the Latino family because he taught us that you are not Indians," he said. "Christopher Columbus, bless his heart, never asked the indigenous people he found what they called themselves."

"Here we are today with common problems and, really, a common destiny," he said.

Mr. Farrakhan said because the Navajo Nation is 27,000 square miles, that makes the Navajo people powerful beyond many others.

"I did not come to a poor people because when you own land it's better than having a dollar because this dollar is fading in terms of its real value," he said. "But the land will never lose its



*The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan and President Shirley, Jr., walk to the Navajo Nation Council Chambers together prior to the Minister's address.*

value. If we take care of Mother Earth, then Mother Earth will take care of us."

On Tuesday, Mr. Farrakhan met with President Shirley. He inquired about Navajo life, government, politics, culture and belief. His first question was about the meaning of the Navajo Nation seal.

The President explained that in the center of the tribal seal are a horse, sheep and cow to represent the traditional means of livelihood to the Navajo people. Embracing them are stalks of sacred white and yellow corn, representing the balance between the female and male.

Above both is a rainbow to symbolize the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation. Surrounding it all are 50 arrowheads pointed outward as protection of the Navajo Nation and its people.



*Minister Farrakhan greets Navajo Nation Council Delegate Ben Shelly, chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee, following a meeting with delegates in the President's office Tuesday. To the Minister's is his Chief of Staff Leonard Muhammad. In back are delegates Rex Lee Jim and Raymond Maxx.*

President Shirley presented Mr. Farrakhan with a wooden seal of the Navajo Nation, its flag, and a copy of the book "The Enduring Navajo."



At a dinner that evening, he presented the Minister with a Pendleton Code Talker blanket and a lapel pin of the tribal seal.

Mr. Farrakhan said no one had placed a blanket over his shoulders as the President did since Winnie Mandela presented him with a blanket in South Africa. He also said he receives many lapel pins but doesn't wear them but that he

"What can we do to ease the suffering for the people?" he asked. "The plight of the indigenous people needs to be made known to the people of the United States and the world."

President Shirley's meeting with Minister Farrakhan continues his initiative of outreach to people of other faiths, ways of life, color, ethnicities and nationalities. Over the past two years, he's met with leaders of Latino, Jewish, Christian and indigenous organizations, as well as representatives from other countries.



*Joining President Shirley and First Lady Vikki Shirley before the Window Rock, from left to right are, Mother Tynnetta Muhammad, wife of the late Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Yo'NasDa LoneWolf Muhammad, national director of the Indigenous Nations Alliance of the Millions More Movement, in back, Mr. Farrakhan's Chief of Staff Leonard Muhammad, Minister Farrakhan, his wife Mother Kadijah Farrakhan, Minister of Agriculture Dr. Ridgely Mu'Min, Mrs. Shirley, and Mr. Farrakhan's daughter, Maria.*

would wear the Navajo Nation's seal because it represents the fulfillment of prophesy of the coming together of the Black and Red nations.

Mr. Farrakhan said that the Navajo are a great people who have a lot to teach the world if the world would listen.

"Cultural expression is the best way to get over an idea," he said.

Last year, the Indigenous Steering Committee of the World Summit on the Information Society asked him to represent the 370 million indigenous people of the world as spokesman before the general assembly of the United Nations meeting in Tunisia, Africa.

Last month, he spoke at the national conference of the League of United Latin American Citizens in Milwaukee. And last week, he met with officials of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints at the church's headquarters in Salt Lake City.

"This is the first Navajo President to really make an attempt to reach out to other nations," said Cora Maxx-Phillips, director of the Navajo Division of Social Services.

President Shirley told Mr. Farrakhan that despite Navajos living within a superpower, there continues to be poverty and hunger in Navajoland. The

unmet need is estimated to be around \$500 million, and the federal government's budgeting process historically has come short for Native people, he said.

He explained that at one time before the foreigner arrived with more powerful weapons, the Navajo people were known as fierce, strong and independent. He said that something happened to cause them to become dependent on the federal government, but now what the government provides is not enough to meet the needs of the people.

Economically, approximately only five percent of the businesses on Navajoland is Navajo-owned.

"If we're going to lift up the Navajo Nation, we're going to need help big time," President Shirley said. "I'm continuing to reach out. I'm losing people every day. I lost five elderly the other day to drunk driving. I'm reach out to kin wherever I can."

"The United States is a super country but people are starving, hungry and poor," the President said. "Living conditions in some areas are atrocious. I'm reaching out to kin, wherever they are, asking for help."

He explained that in Navajo teachings it is believed that people should work together, and that personal, political and ethnic differences are artificial barriers to progress and growth.

"We are all actually on the same side," the President said. "As soon as we get back to that, we have a better chance in the world."

He said the real culprits are monsters that go around devouring people, irrespective of their color, creed, gender, age or wealth.

"Those are the real culprits," President Shirley said. "My elderly and medicine people tell me that we're all members of the five-fingered, intelligent Earth Dwellers called *Diné*, or homo sapiens. The true enemies are the monsters of greed, thirst, jealousy, apathy, ignorance and all manner of diseases. These monsters don't say, 'This is a baby, this is an elderly, let's leave it alone.' These are the culprits we should all be united



against and make war against."

Mr. Farrakhan told reporters he did not come to Navajoland because of any specific issue. He had been asked if racial unrest in Farmington,

N.M., was a purpose of his visit. He said he learned of it only after arriving.

"When you are a minority you begin to think like a minority," he said. "But if you understand that as people of color we outnumber those others, then you are an international people who must not think in terms of yourself and the other Native Americans as minorities."

"You cannot defeat racism by picketing," he told the Council. "Marching will never win the respect of the people who are looking down on us as a people."

Mr. Farrakhan said he wanted to learn a Native American prayer to show his audiences that prayer is universal.

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*Meeting in President Shirley's office, from left to right, front row, is Shahid Muhammad, mathematics teacher of Muhammad University of Islam, Delegates Ervin Keeswood, Rex Lee Jim, Minister Farrakhan, President Shirley, Delegates Thomas Walker, Jr., Pete Ken Atcitty, Cora Maxx-Phillips and Mother Tynetta Muhammad.*

*Back row, left to right is Delegate Raymond Maxx, the Minister's Chief of Staff Leonard F. Muhammad, Ambassador Akbar Muhammad, Delegate Ben Shelly, Minister of Agriculture Dr. Ridgely Mu'Min, Delegate LoRenzo Bates, Minister Joel Muhammad and Yo'NasDa LoneWolf Muhammad.*

